NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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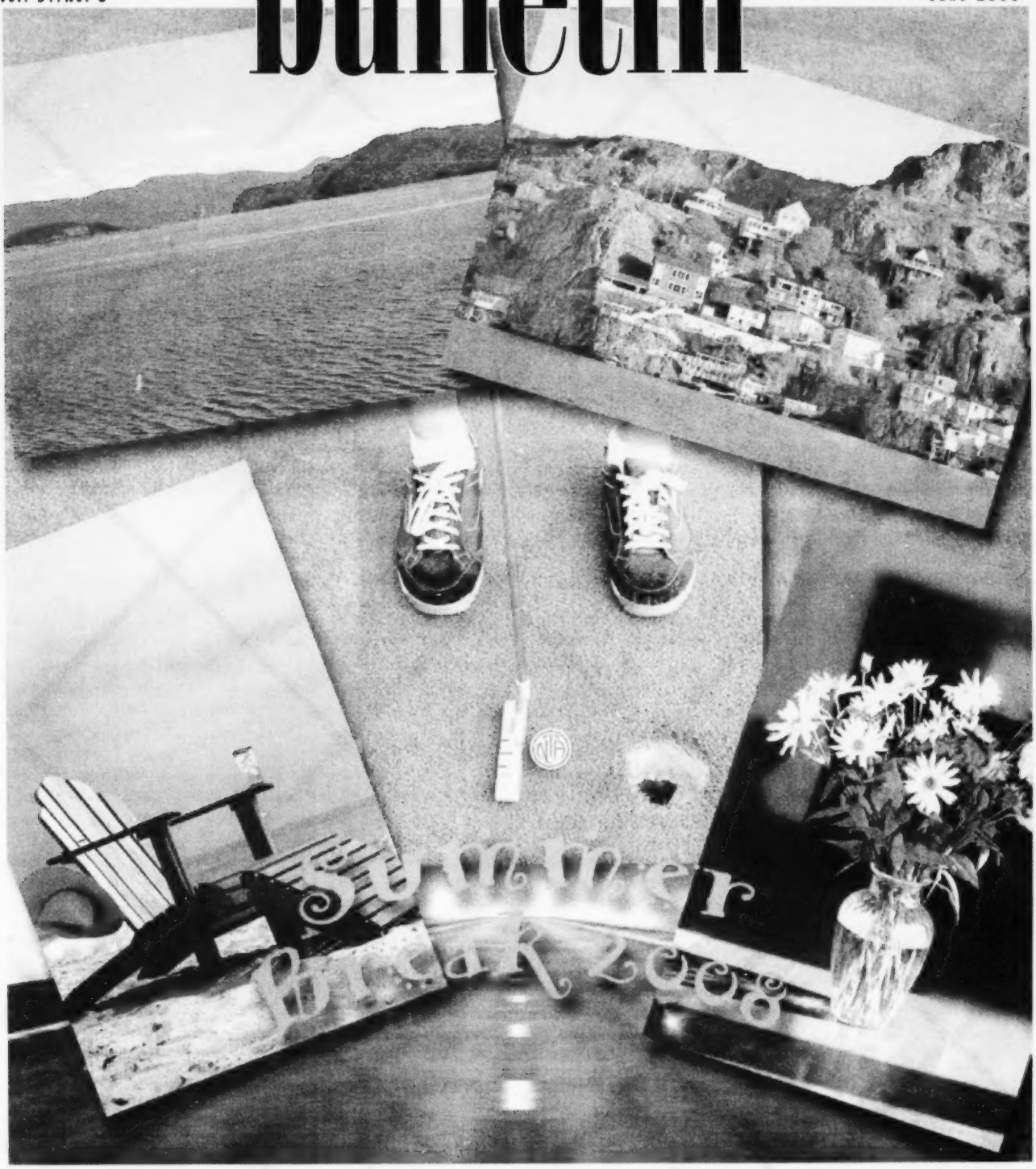

Up Front from the President

But at my back I always hear,
Time's winged chariot hurrying near.
~ Andrew Marvell

That precious commodity of time is so important to us all, but I would contend that no one knows the value of it more than the classroom teacher. Time is most definitely "of the essence" for teachers, and this "time of year" is no exception. Time to assess, prepare, evaluate, coach, encourage, motivate, guide – time to simply teach. We know the tasks and expectations are many, and we know the time available is always at a premium. Nonetheless, as teachers we manage time as least as expertly, and likely more proficiently, as any other professional. Our students benefit greatly from what time that we can give them. Yet we must always advocate for more of it, and rightly so, in our classrooms, schools, NLTA branches and ultimately, at the bargaining table.

As I look back over the past year, representing you as your Association President, I can certainly attest to the fact that time has sped by more quickly than I would have ever imagined. In the time this year has afforded us, we have seen the release and the start of the implementation processes for the Pathways/ISSP review and the new teacher allocation model, as well as the promise of a new and improved Mathematics curriculum. While both government applications have not gone as far as the NLTA and even the Commissions would have preferred to go, in terms of class size reductions, specialist teacher ratios and a host of other related issues, we do have reason to feel that we have and are continuing to make significant progress. Overall, our efforts should produce more time for teachers to accomplish their teaching tasks.

We need to do more and will be pursuing a number of ongoing initiatives tied to government-accepted recommendations in both Commissions that will hopefully provide more time for teachers. Some of these include more professional development for teachers in ISSP/Pathways and increased special education funding with on-line, specific ISSP courses available. In addition, there will be ongoing committee review work with NLTA representation in the areas of guidance, educational psychology, early and late French Immersion and categorical support in special needs. As per the *President's Digest* most recently sent to teachers, relative to further clarification around the new allocation model, we will be vigorously pursuing improvements to the specialist teacher ratio, a high school allocation formula/model, improved class size maximums and deployment of such for kindergarten classes and further application of the needs based part of the new allocation model.

The needs based profiling at the school level is, I believe, the most significant part of the new model and is a part that must be utilized to be realized. While the new model is still evolving and we will be advocating for adjustments and refinements from year to year, we have government agreement that a needs based profile, generating its power from the local level, i.e., the school, is an expected and necessary part of the new process. As "time marches on" it is an area that the NLTA, School Districts, parents and the Department of Education must never lose sight of as it represents the "safety net", if you will, for students and teachers in future, respective of final allocations to schools.

Allow me to extend my sincere thanks to you all for the wonderful work you have accomplished this year with your students. It is always a challenge to reach all of our students, but teachers in this province are among the best in the world and have a great capacity for imparting learning, instilling respect and expressing caring in the students whom they teach. Given the constraints of time that you all face, it is with pride and respect in you, that I offer my gratitude and congratulations in the successes you have produced with your students this past year. Please take the time this summer to enjoy personal and/or professional pursuits, your families and don't forget to take some individual time – just for you.

Have a great summer.

Sean

THE
bulletin

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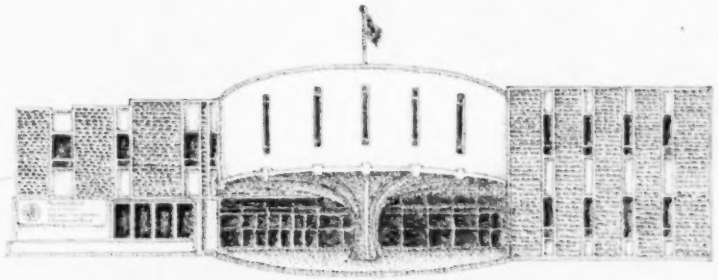
NLTA Summer Hours

June 30 - August 29
Monday to Thursday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday
8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.



PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

GOULDS

Something to talk about!

Trina Russell

Everybody is talking at Goulds Elementary School, and for one student in particular, this is a great accomplishment. This success is due mostly to the amazing support and dedicated teaching of one very special teacher – Trina Russell, one of the special needs teachers at Goulds Elementary. One of her students found it very difficult to talk to others, especially adults, when Ms. Russell first started working with her. Thanks to Ms. Russell's gentle guidance and enthusiastic teaching, her student has since blossomed into a very outgoing child. "It is hard to believe the change that has taken place in this young student but, then again, knowing Ms. Russell and the rest of the staff at the school, it is no wonder at all," said Donna Dalton, Special Education teacher at Goulds Elementary.

Ms. Russell was able to bring about this remarkable change in her student by using the Newspaper in Education program in a very unique way. Every day she has her students deliver the newspapers to classrooms, including her student who was having difficulty talking to others. It was through this process that her student learned to take a moment to tell classes what she found interesting in the paper each day or to answer other questions. The teachers and students at the school delight in seeing her everyday and look forward to her great sense of humor. She has become a very prominent person since taking on the job of delivering the newspaper, so much so that she was recently featured on the front page of *The Telegram* after being interviewed about her job at school. "Congratulations Ms. Russell. Your hard work and dedication have certainly paid off," said Ms. Dalton. "The rest of your students are likewise fortunate to have such a wonderful teacher. Keep up the great work. The world needs more teachers like you."

FOXTRAP

Energizer Day a huge success

On Friday, April 25, Frank Roberts Junior High School in Foxtrap held their third annual Energizer Day to promote healthy eating and active living. The day was organized and run by the school's HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Committee which consists of student and teacher volunteers.

The day began with a huge conga line into the gymnasium where Mr. Rod Stockley of Coast 101.1 FM hosted an opening assembly. Students and staff were treated to performances by the Frank Roberts Junior High Dance Team and the Cowan Heights Skippers. "Both groups did an amazing job getting everyone pumped and energized!" said Kelsey Noseworthy, a Grade 9 student and President of Frank Roberts Spirit Council. "Once we were all ready to go, students rotated through a variety of sessions which got them up and moving." Various presenters came into the school to teach students about cheerleading, skipping, martial arts, salsa dancing, hip hop dancing, cup-stacking, boxing, rugby, ultimate frisbee, hula-hooping, and wrestling. Other activities included a student Amazing Race and Boot Camp.

Students at Frank Roberts Junior High get energized at a hula-hoop session.

Kelsey said students enjoyed all the activities and sessions and needless to say, there was something for everyone! As a part of HEAL only healthy food

choices were served and every student was provided with a free healthy snack of fruit, yogurt and milk. T-shirts sporting the "Get Energized" theme and a logo designed by Grade 7 student, Kyle Morgan, were sold to all interested persons.

The school would like to thank all presenters: Mr. Rod Stockley; McDonald's for their generous donations of prizes and coupons; Manuels Irving for their generous donation of bananas; LeDrew Lumber and Home Hardware for their donation of piping and supplies to make the hoops; and all the hard-working student and teacher volunteers. Energizer Day was a huge success!

WESTERN BAY

School celebrates grand reopening of gymnasium

On April 18, staff and students of Cabot Academy in Western Bay held a long-awaited celebration – the grand reopening of the gymnasium. The school gymnasium had been closed since early August due to the discovery of mould in the building. After a complete dismantling and reconstruction of the interior and exterior of the gym, it finally became accessible to staff and students on April 9. The staff and students now have a totally reconstructed facility to enjoy.

Students at Cabot Academy at the grand reopening of the school gymnasium.

The reopening was filled with physical activities which included a basketball game between one team of students and another team of staff and parents. There was also a skipping competition, Dance Dance Revolution competition and the grand finale which saw staff, students, and guests dance their way through the Cha Cha Slide, Macarena, Bird Dance, and YMCA. "The whole gymnasium was a buzz of excitement as all participants strutted their stuff to celebrate this exciting day," said Mr. Stephen King, Grade 4 Physical Education teacher at Cabot Academy.

The staff of Cabot Academy would like to thank all parents, family members, and guests who came out to celebrate this special day. A special thank you is extended to several special guests who took time out of their busy schedules to join in the celebration, including Mr. John Way, Ms. Charlene Johnson, Father Michael Barker and Mr. George Penney.

CAMPBELLTON

Greenwood Academy goes green

In an effort to create a more inviting and appealing environment in the learning resource centre at Greenwood Academy in Campbellton, the school decided to use recycling as a fundraiser. Throughout the year a few Recycling Blitz's were held where students were invited to bring in recyclable items from home. "We usually received an average of approximately 3,100 items," said Pansy Canning, Administrative Assistant at Greenwood Academy. "Not bad for a school of 192 students, but we knew we could do better." The school looked for a way to motivate the students to bring in as many recyclables as possible, not only as a fundraiser, but also to instill an attitude of respect for our Earth. Students were challenged to bring in 4,000 items over a three-day period, with a reward of the Principal and Vice-Principal having green hair for a day. When this goal was reached after three days, students were again challenged by promising green hair for almost the entire staff if they were able to bring in another 1,000 items. "As usual, the Greenwood Academy students and families exceeded our expectations. After the four days we reached a grand total of 13,121 items and as a result, 18 staff members went green for the day!" concluded Ms. Canning.

The staff at Greenwood Academy pose for a picture with their newly dyed green hair.

DEER LAKE

Drama troupe awarded at Regional Drama Festival

Congratulations to Elwood Regional High School's Drama troupe, "No Stage Theatre," who received the honour of "Outstanding Play" and "Best Director" at the Western School District's Regional Drama Festival (Central Zone), hosted by Presentation Junior High School, April 3-5 in Corner Brook. The Deer Lake group was picked by festival adjudicator Toshon Dawe to represent the region at the Provincial High School Theatre Showcase hosted by the Eastern School District's Carbonear Collegiate, May 8-10. "No Stage Theatre" received the awards for their presentation of Janet Allard's play, *Incognito*.

Members of No Stage Theatre are: (Back row) Brandon Young, Mike Pelley-White, Adam Keats; (Middle row) Director Jordan Stringer, Sam Chynn, Jeremy Gordon, Devon Roberts, Colten Normore, Sam Payne, Chantell Coles, Alec Bennett; (Front row, kneeling) Victoria Legge, Kody Harnum, and Kendra-Lee Williams.

STEPHENVILLE

The Girl Time: Grade 7/8 healthy sexuality

A very informative and interesting weekend activity was held at the Holiday Inn in Stephenville on April 26 and 27 for Grade 7 and 8 girls in the Bay St. George area. Girls from various schools in the region (Stephenville Middle School, St. Michael's Elementary, E.A. Butler All Grade, Belanger Memorial and St. James' Regional High School) were in attendance. The event was put on by the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre (NLSHC) and the training was provided by Brenda Kitchen, Executive Director of NLSHC and Jennifer Spracklin, Education Coordinator with the NLSHC. According to Ms. Kitchen, the NLSHC learned about this program while attending a Sexuality Conference in Guelph and permission was received from the Region of Waterloo Public Health to adopt this program and bring it to Newfoundland and Labrador.

This is not the first time that the NLSHC has come to the west coast to work with adolescents to promote healthy sexual attitudes, choices/decisions and behaviours. However, in the past, the majority of this prevention work had been done with high school aged youth, many of whom were already sexually active. One of the goals of The Girl Time is to reach youth *before* they become sexually active.

Specific goals covered during the two day event included: helping girls delay sexual activity and make healthy sexual choices; how to decrease teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections; helping girls become aware of gender stereotypes and roles and gender expectations and how these attitudes may lead to violence. As well, a parent package was sent home to assist parents in fostering better and easier communication between them and their daughters with regard to this topic.

The girls attending the event are now responsible for coordinating educational training (along with their guidance counsellor or teacher chaperone) for their peers. Action plans were developed by the participants from each school and the goals decided upon will hopefully be met in the next few weeks and during the 2008-09 school year.

According to the Belanger Memorial participants: "The weekend was totally awesome and hilarious!"; "An experience we will never forget."; "We had a great time and learned so many new things and met new friends."; and "We can't wait to show the other people in our school what we learned."

If you would like additional information on this program and/or would like to bring it to your area, please feel free to contact Brenda Kitchen at 709-579-1009 or toll free at 1-877-666-9847.

Belanger Memorial students work on their action plan.

WESTERN NEWFOUNDLAND

Learning through the Arts in Western NL launches new website

Learning through the Arts in Western Newfoundland (LTTA/WNL) has launched an exciting new website which provides information about the program and artists as well as a searchable database of over 70 LTTA/WNL activities/lesson plans.

The database will be of use to educators who want to invigorate and enrich core curriculum subjects by using arts activities and to anyone searching for ideas for arts projects. The database is searchable by age level, type of activity (for example, visual arts, music, dance, drama, storytelling), artist, subject and theme and will provide a clear and concise outline of the process, materials and time required. Curricular outcomes and additional resources are also given. The address is: www.wnlsd.ca/lttawnl.

LTTA/WNL has been operating in the region since 1999. It is a program which uses the arts as resources and tools to develop core curriculum in Grades 1 to 6. It benefits students, teachers, and regional artists. A recent survey of schools in the region regarding enrichment programs placed LTTA/WNL among the top five programs.

Operating in 15 schools in primarily rural Western Newfoundland (and in four schools in Corner Brook) they work with nearly 3,000 students, 130 teachers and 8 to 10 artists yearly.

The program is supported by the Western School District and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through its Cultural Connections Program.

For further information, contact Charlotte Jones, Regional Coordinator, LTTA/WNL, charlotte.jones@wnlsd.ca, Tel: (709) 634-0607.

ST. JOHN'S

Avalon Regional Historica Fair a great success

The Avalon Regional Historica Fair, held May 2-3 at Macdonald Drive Junior High School in St. John's, was an outstanding success. There were numerous provincial and national prizes such as Marconi Branch NLTA Award for a project related to education, Edmund Dawson Award for a project related to communities, Theme Award, Laurier LaPierre Medal presented to students who show enthusiasm for their project, RHB Award presented for a project related to aboriginal history, plus more.

This July, the Avalon Region will be represented by two Grade 6 students at the National Fair in Victoria, British Columbia. Blake Newman, a grade 6 student from All Hallows School in North River was selected for his project entitled "Root Cellars" and Elliott Halliday, a Grade 6 student at St. Peter's Elementary in Mount Pearl was selected for his project entitled "Coastal Boats of Newfoundland and Labrador". Both students' projects explored the world of their grandfathers.

Students whose history projects are selected at the Regional Fairs will gather together from all Canadian provinces and territories at the National Fair. Here they will showcase their projects and participate in a week-long History Camp which includes exploration of a part of the country they might otherwise never have a chance to visit. It is a unique opportunity for students to learn about the history and heritage of a specific region of Canada and interact with young people from a diversity of backgrounds, while at the same time strengthening participating students' connections to the history of Canada. The most important part is that they get to meet new friends from across Canada.

The head of the Newfoundland and Labrador delegation for this year's national fair will be teacher Chesley West from Macdonald Drive Junior High School. The chaperone representing the Avalon Region will be teacher Mary van Thiel, also from Macdonald Drive Junior High.

The Historica Fairs program is dedicated to engaging children in the exploration of our past. By involving children and their communities in a celebration of our heritage, we can help build more vibrant and responsible citizens. Additional information on Heritage Fairs can be found at www.heritage.k12.nf.ca and www.histori.ca.

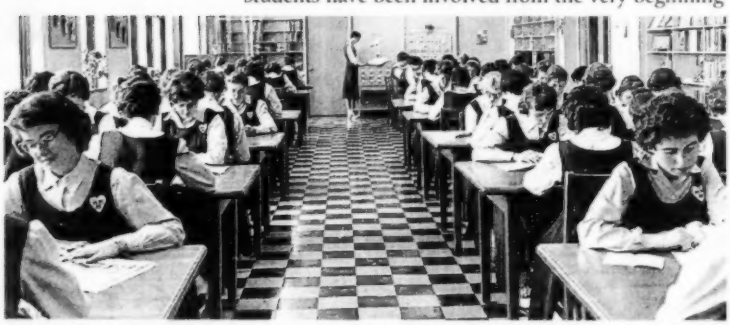
Teachers Chelsey West and Mary van Thiel with Avalon Regional Heritage Fair winners Elliott Halliday (left) and Blake Newman.

Heart Documentary Film Project

November 2008 marks the 50th anniversary of Holy Heart High School. In honour of this occasion, 15 students, with support from the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Cooperative (NIFCO), will produce a documentary film about the history of the school. Jeanne O'Brien, an English and Film Studies teacher at Holy Heart, created the project as a way to build upon a growing student interest in filmmaking and as a means to document the rich cultural legacy of the school. "Our initial step was to locate funding for the project and we were pleased that NIFCO immediately came on board in a creative partnership. Generous donations from the Mercy and Presentation Sisters, who founded the school, were essential in enabling this project," said O'Brien.

According to Jean Smith, Executive Director of NIFCO, "This project is a natural fit for us as it is part of our mandate to encourage film initiatives through youth outreach programs. We have worked successfully with Jeanne and students from Heart in the past and we are excited about working with this crew to tell the story of Holy Heart through film." NIFCO personnel will guide students through the pre-production, production and post-production stages of the documentary, and they will build camera, sound and editing skills. "I am thrilled at the thought of working in the NIFCO editing facilities with state-of-the-art equipment and the province's best filmmakers", said Renee Callahan St. John, a Level II student.

Mary Lewis, a noted filmmaker who has won Gemini and Toronto International Film Festival awards for her work, will not only direct the project but also mentor Heart students in filmmaking and animation processes. "We are delighted to have Mary Lewis, an alumnus of Holy Heart, come on board as the director and animator for the film – she understands the school and brings a great deal of enthusiasm and skill to the project," said O'Brien. Heart students have been involved from the very beginning of the project: they have identified potential funders, conducted research, participated in project planning and devised a shooting schedule. Level III student Leah McGrath Reynolds has enjoyed researching archival materials: "As someone with an interest in history, working on the research and archival aspect of the project has been a great experience." Level II student Jacob Pratt, who intends to pursue a career in filmmaking after high school, said, "An initiative such as the documentary project makes high school studies much more interesting for me."



Study Hall. Credit: Holy Heart Archives courtesy of Learning Resources Teacher Ms. Janet Toope.

The as yet untitled documentary began filming in April 2008 and will debut at the 50th anniversary ceremonies for Holy Heart High School from November 13-15, 2008. "It's an enormous undertaking, but a commemorative project such as this film builds on the school's legacy as a leader in arts education. This is a legacy that's certainly worth documenting," said O'Brien.

For information on Holy Heart anniversary events visit the school's website at www.hhm.k12.nf.ca or contact the committee co-chairs, Ms. Margo Connors at: margoconnorsstack@esdnl.ca or Ms. Sharon Brennan at: sharonbrennan@esdnl.ca.

Teachers rock

Seventy teams, 280 teachers, great sponsors, good prizes, food, and fun times! "No matter how you look at it, the 23rd Annual St. John's Centre Branch NLTA Curling FUNspiel was a fantastic success," said Jim Dinn, member of the St. John's Centre Branch FUNspiel Organizing Committee.

As in the past, the emphasis was on fun. Scores were not recorded, and there were no playoffs. The event, which took place at the St. John's Curling Club-RE/MAX Centre on the evenings of April 9-11 and all day Saturday, April 12, afforded teachers a much needed opportunity to socialize with colleagues.

The FUNspiel's main sponsor, Molson Breweries, provided prizes for all teams and Appleton's donated gift baskets. Jungle Jim's partnered with the branch to revive the most outrageous costume contest and a variety of local businesses supplied prizes for a new addition to this year's FUNspiel – the frisbee toss. Not quite as heavy as the curling stones, but just as challenging to get to the other side of the ice. And just as much fun!

Plans are already underway to make next year's FUNspiel even more fun. "So, get your roll of duct tape ready, plan your costume, and practice throwing a frisbee. And whatever else you do, learn how to yell, *Hurry hard!* It may not improve your curling

skills, but at least you'll sound like a professional," concluded Mr. Dinn.

Teachers enjoy a little friendly competition at the 23rd Annual St. John's Centre Branch NLTA Curling Funspiel.

C.A.R.E. Week at Gonzaga

"Although C.A.R.E. Week (Care and Respect Everywhere) is the initiative we have taken upon ourselves as a Gonzaga community, it is actually something even bigger than that!" said Tracy-Ann Gardiner, Special Education teacher at Gonzaga High School.

C.A.R.E. Week, which took place this year from April 21-25, was born out of the Department of Education's Safe and Caring Schools Policy and as such, was the perfect avenue to explore to keep in line with Gonzaga's School Development. But it was even more far-reaching than that. The ideas, drives, and challenges that took place all week had an underlying message of "Random Acts of Kindness", which is actually an annual, national initiative that many schools undertake each year.

The week began on Monday with a delightful Opening Ceremony whereby the school got everybody "pumped up" and made 15 random draws for winners of a C.A.R.E. Week t-shirt, which was designed by Gonzaga student Shelia Pond.

Tuesday, as a gesture of kindness, the school gave every person lollipops and a fresh piece of fruit. Gonzaga would like to send a special thank you to Mr. Cecil Gardiner and Sobeys, Foodland, NL for all the delicious apples.

"Kookies for Kindness" was celebrated on Wednesday. Student teams baked several dozen cookies, (under the "kind heart" of Ms. Joanne Lockyer), packaged them beautifully and distributed them, along with a cup of Tim Horton's coffee to each and every staff member. A team of students also distributed these items to the school's student assistants, custodians, kitchen staff and even their bus drivers! A special thank you is extended to Mr. Greg Pike and Mr. Rhinelander from Tim Horton's on Portugal Cove Road for their delicious coffee.

Pink Day on Thursday was a phenomenal success! Eighty percent of the school's total population that day were wearing pink with 11 classes of 28 wearing 100%. In a random draw, Mr. Squires' class won the Pizza Party with dessert for the entire class. "Clearly Gonzaga sent a strong message in support of anti-bullying, because we all know that pink is the color for this cause," said Ms. Gardiner. As an added bonus, Mrs. Harvey organized free cupcakes with pink icing and Mr. Ron Ryan and Mr. Peter Keough and another team of students helped distribute pink lemonade as well to everyone wearing pink.

At the closing ceremonies on Friday, Premier Danny Williams had an opportunity to speak to the students and staff, as did Mr. Darrin Pike, Director of Education for the Eastern School District. The school choir performed their rendition of "This Little Light of Mine" and the Prize Patrol distributed over 60 prizes donated from various community businesses that supported this event.

All teachers were on board all week as well distributing "Gotcha's" to make sure no act of kindness went unnoticed. Inspirational songs and stories on the P.A. every morning also added a nice touch.

An important aspect of C.A.R.E. Week is donations to several charities. This year Gonzaga reached their goal and raised $1,025 from the Wish Tree. Gonzaga's three Enterprise classes raised an additional $975 for this cause, for a grand total of $2,000. Over $1,000 was raised for the SPCA and over 500 food items were collected for the Mary Queen of Peace Food Bank. The school was also pleased to present $5,479 to Real Time Cancer.

"I am overwhelming impressed with the ultimate success of C.A.R.E. Week here at Gonzaga High School," concluded Ms. Gardiner. "This week has been a true testament not only to the Gonzaga spirit, but the spirit of giving – the spirit of Random Acts of Kindness."

Gonzaga choir members entertain at the closing ceremonies of C.A.R.E. Week.

NLTA Senior Mathematics League Provincial Final

The 20th running of the NLTA Senior Mathematics League Provincial Final was held Saturday, May 3 in St. John's at the District School Conference Centre, Eastern School District. The event has grown from a competition in the St. John's area to a province-wide competition with many schools competing in local leagues in regions all across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ten teams, totalling forty of the province's best mathematics problem solvers and their teacher-sponsors, arrived on campus at Memorial University Friday afternoon, enjoyed a 'welcome to campus' presentation, and a full campus tour arranged by the Office of Student Recruitment.

For the third year in a row Labrador was represented at the final, this year with a team from Labrador West – Menihek High, Labrador City. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) is now a veteran participant sending teams to the Provincial Final for the fourth time and this year representing Tricentia Academy in Arnold's Cove, Baccalieu Collegiate in Old Perlican, and Baie Verte Collegiate. CDLI students performed well but finished just out of the medals. Other participating teams included Carbonear Collegiate, Corner Brook Regional High, Gander Collegiate, Holy Heart High (St. John's), Pasadena Academy, St. Lawrence Academy, and Prince of Wales Collegiate (St. John's).

The game was very close with seven teams battling for first place right to the end! This year's winners are: Holy Heart, placing 3rd with 38 points, Pasadena Academy, placing 2nd with 40 points, and Provincial Champions Prince of Wales Collegiate, with 45 points. (Games have a total possible 65 regular points and up to 10 bonus points.)

1st Place Winners — Prince of Wales Collegiate, St. John's. (l-r): Presenter: Dr. Margo Kondratieva, Dept. of Mathematics and Statistics, Memorial University; Teacher-Sponsor: Mr. Tim Harpur; Students: Kirsten Morry, Nick Parsons, Mark Yang, and Chris Howse.

"Best Presentation of a Solution" prizes were earned by Jonathan Mong (Holy Heart High School), Matt Legge (Corner Brook Regional High School) and Shane Keats (Menihek High School).

Paul Gosse, provincial coordinator, would like to extend congratulations to all students who participated throughout the year as well as special thanks to the teacher sponsors for all they do. Special thanks also to the problem setters Dr. Peter Booth and Dr. Bruce Shawyer (Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Memorial University), and Dr. John Grant-McLoughlin (University of New Brunswick), faculty organizers (Dr. Bruce Watson, Dr. Margo Kondratieva and Mr. Shannon Sullivan, all from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics), and the coordinators who organize games throughout the province. Special thanks also go out to the Office of Student Recruitment, Memorial University.

For further information on the NLTA Senior Mathematics League, visit www.math.mun.ca/ and click "Outreach".

St. Matthew's Developmental Unit thankful for community support

The students and staff of the St. Matthew's Developmental Unit in St. John's would like to thank CUPE Local 1560 for their generous donation of Chartwell's Catered Food for their annual Family and Friends Day, that takes place the Friday of Education Week.

Pictured l-r: Sheila Flynn-Healey, Special Education Teacher (Developmental Unit); Kerri Wicks, Special Education Teacher; Clare Thorne, Program Assistant (Developmental Unit), CUPE Local 1560; Patricia Mercer, Special Education (Developmental Unit); and Doug Merner, Program Assistant (Developmental Unit), CUPE Local 1560.

NLCPA Branch Presidents' Seminar a worthwhile venture

On April 18 and 19, the Provincial Executive of the Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association (NLCPA) conducted a working seminar with NLCPA Branch Presidents/ Contacts at the Battery Hotel in St. John's. This Special Project was a significant objective in working toward the standardization of branch operations and increasing activity levels throughout all regions of the province. Participation and attendance was strong with representation from seven of their nine branches. Lily Cole, NLTA Vice-President, brought greetings from the NLTA and contributed to Friday night's discussions.

NLCPA President, Trent Langdon, says feedback was overwhelmingly positive as it was a prime networking opportunity, a chance to discuss key organizational issues (e.g. finances, branch structure, communications, etc.), and a direct move on key actions in the development of our association. "The group was clearly devoted and passionate about the NLCPA with attendees leaving the seminar with a much clearer plan for their respective branches as well as a renewed sense of interest in the workings of the NLCPA. This was definitely a worthwhile venture for the Executive (and the NLCPA) and we anticipate significant spin-offs. Special thanks to the NLTA for sponsoring this special project!"

l-r: Steve Alexander, Ed Humber, Glenda Ball, Lorraine Pittman, Colette Oldford-Short, Dave Warren, Beaton Walsh, Amanda Gaultois, Lily Cole (NLTA Vice-President), Trent Langdon (NLCPA President), and Darryl Chippett (NLCPA Treasurer)

Students share ideas and culture at ICS/EEC Conference

The 2008 conference for Interchange on Canadian Studies/Echange sur les études canadiennes (ICS/EEC) was held in Regina, Saskatchewan from April 27 to May 3. The theme of the conference was *Energy in Our Future: What Kind? What Cost? What Opportunity!* The Newfoundland and Labrador delegation included a total of nine students representing five school districts, two chaperones and the newly elected president, Suzelle Lavallée (French First Language, Department of Education).

Each day was full to overflowing! Students heard keynote addresses from national and international speakers, including Nobel laureate, Dr. Malcolm Wilson. They also had the opportunity to participate in workshops devoted to the costs of energy production and innovations in energy research. The conference culminated in student presentations by cross-regional groups in response to the ICS/EEC challenge on *Energy in Our Future: What Kind? What Cost? What Opportunity!* Saskatchewan's culture and heritage was celebrated in a number of extra-curricular events including regional tours, local Francophone bands, multicultural exhibits and a special presentation of *The Trial of Louis Riel*, presented at the MacKenzie Art Gallery theatre.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Exchanges Canada/Echanges Canada, provincial Ministries of Education and local Saskatchewan sponsors and volunteers, ICS/EEC 2008 fulfilled its vision to promote the exchange of ideas, the stimulation of collaborative problem solving and the sharing of cultures. The Newfoundland and Labrador delegates will surely carry this experience with them into whatever future endeavours they pursue. For further information on ICS/EEC visit the website at www.ics.ca.

Newfoundland and Labrador student delegation at the Interchange on Canadian Studies/Echange sur les études canadiennes in Regina.

SANDRA BRANTON (NEE HALL), 1967 - 2008

Sandra was born in Labrador City and grew up in the Labrador West area. Upon graduation from high school, she attended Memorial University of Newfoundland were she was enrolled in the School of Music. Later she focused on French, Linguistics and Education. She graduated in 1991 with two degrees – Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education.

Upon graduation she returned to the Labrador West area and worked in different education roles for a few years before taking a position with Human Resources Canada as an employment counsellor.

In 2002 she went back to teaching, initially in substitute and replacement roles until she obtained a permanent position teaching music at J.R. Smallwood Middle School in Wabush.

Sandra had a deep appreciation and love of music which she demonstrated in many community activities, especially at the Carol United Church. She was the choirmaster for the Labrador West Community Choir and also shared her talents with the French Community Choir. In addition, her beautiful voice could be heard on many occasions and touched the hearts of all, especially on Christmas Eve when she sang *O Holy Night* .

Students and staff of J.R. Smallwood Middle School in Wabush had the opportunity to experience and share Sandra's love of music when she began teaching the music program in 2005. Her enthusiasm and dedication spread throughout the school community and was exhibited in a variety of activities, including concerts, instrument band, jazz band, handbells, Smallwood Idol and participation in the Lab West Music Festival. Sandra was very giving of her time and spirit, and could be found volunteering at all school functions.

In the spring of 2007 Sandra was diagnosed with cancer. She faced the disease with the vigor and determination she demonstrated in her profession. She was a very spiritual person who invited others to help her fight this disease, relying heavily on her faith. Sandra was looking forward to returning to teaching upon her recovery. Unfortunately, that opportunity was taken from her less than a year after being diagnosed.

Sandra is survived by her husband Rob, two sons Matthew and Mark, her mother Doris Hall, her sister Donna Hiscock (Sean), her brothers Bob Hall (Cheryl), Derrick Hall (Jeannie), and many relatives, friends and colleagues. Sandra's love of life and her infectious laugh will be missed by everyone who had a chance to be touched by her.

(Submitted by Darren Cramm on behalf of the family.)

CATHERINE PAULINE KING (NEE GREEN), 1953 - 2008

On March 5, 2008, Catherine's family and friends were deeply saddened by her passing after a four and a half year battle with cancer.

Catherine was born February 7, 1953 in Port aux Basques where she resided with her family until completion of high school. Catherine immediately began studies at Memorial University in 1970 and convocated in 1973 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Upon completion of her degree, Catherine returned to her home grounds to teach in Isle aux Morts at the age of twenty. A year later she returned to university to further her studies and received a BA(Ed). In July of the following year she married her life companion, Carson King, a fellow teacher, in Port aux Basques. The newly married couple traveled to Cottrells Cove where they lived and worked for the next five years. In 1980 they moved to Botwood where they fulfilled their teaching careers and raised a family with two children, Stephen and Amy. During these years Catherine taught Grade 5 at both Peterview Academy and Memorial Academy until her retirement in 2003.

Throughout her career, Catherine was eager to maintain her professional development as she participated in various institutes: 1992 summer semester in England studying Geography and English, the CATT (Computer Assisted Teacher Talk) Program for the teachers of Exploits Valley, and a summer institute in Gros Morne National Park and Labrador, sponsored by Parks Canada.

Catherine took great pleasure in guiding students to reach their potential. She was known for her love of, and dedication to, teaching. No task was ever too great for Catherine and she completed them with style and determination. She took a special interest in her students' co-curricular activities, taking her Grade 5 class on trips to St. John's for a number of years. She also developed an avid interest in the Heritage Fair, involving her students each year in the Regional Fair in Grand Falls-Windsor.

Catherine was a member of the Botwood Kinettes and involved her family in many community organizations and events. Above all, Catherine loved the outdoors as it gave her much enjoyment and happiness. No matter the season, there was always time for adventures with family and friends by her side enjoying every moment that life had to offer.
(Submitted by the King family.)

EDWARD HARVEY VOKEY, 1920 - 2008

Harv had a life well lived. A life that truly speaks for itself.

He was a distinguished gentleman. He made sure plates and glasses were full in his house. His brilliant blue eyes and broad smile flashed a warm welcome to the person before him. He wasn't afraid to show his emotions. He showed the depth of his caring with his tearful farewells, his letter writing, his phone calls, his visits and his memory of birthdays and other special occasions. He carried himself with dignity in his promptness, his careful dress and his attention to detail.

He had a playful mind, a formidable memory and voracious appetite for reading. He often entertained with spontaneous recitation of literature, scripture or song. One moment T.S. Eliot, the next a nursery rhyme – whatever suited the situation.

He gave to the community as a teacher, organist, lay reader, journalist, photographer, hospital board member, justice of the peace, calligrapher, historian, donor and visitor of the sick. His dedication and commitment to these involvements allowed him to know many. He was a people person. He was happiest while with family and friends.

Harv faced challenges with courage, faith and optimism. He studied and worked in spite of significant hearing impairment from a young age. He overcame many medical setbacks later in life. Despite increased isolation resulting from failing sight and hearing and decreased mobility, he complained little and graciously reminded us to "come when you can".

He and Ellie together created an environment of love, security and opportunity for their family. His daily thoughts and prayers were with us. He seemed to experience our joys, worries, disappointments and successes as intensely as his own. He made his home a place where family and friends love to come, again and again. His legacy very much lives in us.

Shortly before his death he wrote in a letter: "There is nothing left undone, you may be assured. Let us be prepared for the present and the future and hope for the best."
(Submitted by the family of E.H. Vokey and written by his grandson, Keith A. Vokey.)

Sandra Branton

Catherine King

Edward Harvey Vokey

Meaningful Progress

by EDWARD HANCOCK

Once again, we have reached that point in time where another school year is rapidly winding down. It is that time of year when you look back over your students' progress, carry out final evaluations and prepare year-end reports for them. It should also be that time of year when you look back over what you have accomplished this year in bringing another group of students through another stage of their K-12 education. It is also that point in the school year when your Association gives consideration to developments and progress over the past year and looks ahead to those things that will need greatest attention next fall.

There have indeed been significant developments in education this year. We have at last seen the reports of, and government's response to, the ISSP/Pathways Commission and the Teacher Allocation Commission. Both of these Commissions have brought forward recommendations which, when fully enacted, will put in place positive changes for our classrooms. The report of the ISSP/Pathways Commission will see major changes in procedures for providing services to students with special needs and supports for teachers responsible for same. The new Teacher Allocation Model put in place by the Department of Education as a response to the recommendations from the Teacher Allocation Commission is indeed a very positive step towards a more rational and consistent method for allocating teaching units. It has introduced a "needs analysis" component which, when fully implemented, will allow for the consideration of additional units necessary to meet school/student needs which cannot be met by the "numbers driven" part of the model.

This past year has also seen a major improvement in the province's economic fortunes, as ever increasing revenues from oil resources have been realized by the provincial treasury. As a result, this year's provincial budget saw further improvements in allocation of monies for education, including such areas as funding for discretionary teacher leave, implementation of the ISSP/ Pathways action plan, additional teacher units, new school construction and school repairs, and school secretary hours.

Your Association will also be pursuing its members' priorities on the collective bargaining front in the upcoming round of contract negotiations. The opening proposals were finalized and approved by Executive in early April, based upon the priorities established through the usual consultations with members and through Joint Council. Contract negotiations will undoubtedly extend well into the coming school year as your Negotiating Team seeks the best possible contract for teachers. Look for detailed updates in the fall.

As another summer approaches, a sincere note of appreciation is offered to all of you in your classrooms, schools and district/regional offices for your commitment to our students over the past year. As teachers, your lives are driven by what Professor Wayne MacKay calls the "tyranny of the immediate". There is little time to step back from those immediate concerns and take a broader look at the whole enterprise. Your time as teachers is consumed, for the most part, in dealing with the myriad daily tasks, issues and concerns associated with the enterprise we call "teaching". It is, therefore, doubly important that you take time away from the immediate, especially during those school breaks such as the upcoming summer period.

A recent study commissioned by the Canadian Education Association and entitled *Public Education in Canada: Facts, Trends and Attitudes* reported a high degree of public satisfaction with teachers and public support for education. Teachers in this province should be pleased with such survey results. Surveys of public opinion consistently report that you have the support and confidence of the public and parents.

Let that thought stay with you as you begin your summer break from the demands of your profession. Be sure to take some time for yourself over this summer to relax, rejuvenate and recharge the batteries. We, who work on your behalf at your Association, salute you and support you as you work daily for the students in your care. Best wishes for a safe and enjoyable summer.

The most critical factor in a child's education is a caring, qualified and competent teacher.

~ Dr. Linda Darling Hammond, Stanford University

Edward Hancock is Executive Director of the NLTA.

Update from the Provincial Advisory Committee for Safe and Caring Schools

by STEFANIE TUFF

The Department of Education introduced its provincial Safe and Caring Schools Policy in May 2006. In order to promote awareness and implementation of the Policy, and to respond to concerns raised by the NLTA regarding school safety issues, the Provincial Advisory Committee for Safe and Caring Schools was formed in the fall of 2006. The Committee is government funded and co-chaired by the Department of Education and the NLTA. All Committee members are also members of the NLTA and come from across the province. The Committee's mandate is to support the implementation, promotion and sustainability of the provincial Policy through efforts in areas such as: increasing stakeholder and public awareness; ensuring necessary supports for schools and Districts; maximizing resources to support Safe and Caring Schools initiatives; etc. Since its creation, the Committee has approved a Safe and Caring Schools information pamphlet for parents/guardians that was recently distributed to schools. Relevant district and school data has been collected and considered by the Committee in setting priorities for its ongoing work. There is an award available for graduating students who have shown initiative and leadership in promoting Safe and Caring Schools principles in their schools and/or communities. Eleven awards are available on a regional basis in the form of a $500 tuition voucher. Application packages have been sent to districts and award recipients will be selected at the next Committee meeting, scheduled to take place in early June.

A special project fund was also established to help support and recognize efforts and initiatives being made at the school and district level. Thirty awards of $500 each were granted earlier this year, and the recipients were:

Eastern School District
- Holy Spirit High School (Manuels)
- Beaconsfield Junior High School (St. John's)
- Holy Cross Elementary School (St. John's)
- Anthony Paddon Elementary School (Musgravetown)
- Fatima Academy (St. Bride's)
- Carbonear Collegiate (Carbonear)
- John Burke High School (Grand Bank)
- Eastern District Itinerant Teachers for Inclusion
- Eastern Regional Office (Headquarters)
- Burin Regional Office
- Vista Regional Office
- Avalon West Regional Office

Nova Central School District
- Dorset Collegiate (Pilley's Island)
- Lester Pearson Memorial High School (Wesleyville)
- Greenwood Academy (Campbellton)
- Millcrest Academy (Grand Falls-Windsor)
- New World Island Academy (Summerford)
- King Academy (Harbour Breton)
- Point Leamington Academy (Point Leamington)

Western School District
- Burgeo Academy (Burgeo)
- Stephenville Primary School (Stephenville)
- J.J. Curling Elementary (Corner Brook)
- St. Peter's Academy (Benoit's Cove)
- Pasadena Elementary (Pasadena)
- St. James Elementary (Channel-Port aux Basques)
- Truman Eddison Memorial (Griquet) and

St. Anthony Elementary (St. Anthony) – joint award

Labrador School Board
- Mealy Mountain Collegiate (Happy Valley-Goose Bay)
- A.P. Lowe Primary (Labrador City)
- Menihek High School Media Class (Labrador City)

Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial
- Centre éducatif l'ENVOL

All recipients and applicants are to be congratulated for their initiatives and encouraged to continue in their efforts to create and sustain more safe and caring learning and work environments in their schools/district.

The Committee will meet once more this school year and looks forward to continuing to move forward with its mandate in the fall.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Recent Premium Increases

by DON ASH

The NLTA Group Insurance Trustees have directed me, as staff consultant, to write this article providing rationale and explaining the necessity of the recent premium increases in the Basic Life, Health and Dental plan options.

The NLTA Group Insurance Trustees are a committee of volunteer teachers chaired by Provincial Executive member Callista Burridge and charged with the responsibility of governing the Group Insurance Program and making decisions in the best interest of teachers and the Program. A significant task of Trustees is the annual renewal of insurance policies with our insurance underwriters. Each February your Trustees undertake a detailed analysis of claims experience for the previous year(s) and, in consultation with the insurance underwriters estimate the anticipated claims for the coming financial year based on our claims experience, anticipated inflationary factors, trend factors, prescription drug usage, new drugs anticipated on the market, etc. Premium rates are established in an attempt to generate sufficient premium dollars to pay claims and expenses and break even for the coming year.

In February 2008, it was determined that premium rate increases were required in the Basic Life, Health, and Dental plan options.

The Basic Life plan, as of February, was operating in deficit. Quite simply, more money was paid out to beneficiaries as a result of teacher deaths than premium paid by teachers. Analysis of five years of claims, mortality tables and NLTA demographics indicate a premium rate increase of 5.5% was required to pay anticipated claims for the coming financial year.

Similarly, the Health plan was also operating in deficit, with claims and expenses paid out exceeding premiums paid in during the financial year. The inflation of prescription drugs combined with increased drug utilization by our members are the driving factors for the 11.1% premium increase required to pay claims for the coming year.

The Dental plan is operating with a slight surplus for the 2007-08 year. Trustees made a decision to improve the dental benefit by basing dental claims on the 2007 Newfoundland and Labrador Suggested Dental Fee Guide effective May 1, rather than the 2006 Fee Guide. This improvement in benefit necessitated a premium increase of 3.7% to pay for the anticipated increase in claims payment.

A second factor impacting the premiums paid by teachers is the determination of the Government contribution to the NLTA premium rates for Basic Life and Health options. The current Collective Agreement states that Government will pay 50% of the lesser of the NLTA plan rate or the Government plan rate as determined by an independent consultant. In other words, Government will contribute to teachers no more than what they pay for insurance for other Government workers under the Government plan which is owned and operated by Government.

Under the Basic Life plan, Government has had more positive claims experience than the NLTA plan (less death payout) and has been able to reduce its Life Insurance premium rates. Further, the NLTA Dependent Life benefit for spouses and children is greater under the NLTA plan than the Government plan ($10,000 for spouses as opposed to $6,000, and $5,000 for dependent children rather than $3,000). As a result of these factors, Government has reduced its contributions paid towards the NLTA Basic Life premium rate causing an additional increase in the premium amount paid by teachers each month.

In the case of the Health Insurance plan, both Government and NLTA premium rates increased. However, the NLTA Health Insurance plan has better benefits than the Government plan in the areas of prescription drugs and paramedicals. Consequently, Government now pays approximately 49% of the total NLTA premium rate, rather than 50% as in past years.

There was no premium rate increase required in the Basic Accidental Death and Dismemberment plan option and Government continues to pay 50% of this premium rate.

For the remainder of the NLTA Group Insurance plan options – Voluntary Term Life for Teachers and Spouses, Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Long Term Disability, Medical Out of Country, there were no changes in premiums required for this annual renewal.

The overall increase in premium for teachers with Basic Life, Health and Dental coverage as a result of the annual renewal ranges from approximately $3.50 to $9.00 depending on the teacher's salary and whether a teacher has single or family coverage.

Understandably, teachers might ask will premiums continue to rise each year. In regards to the Basic Life Insurance plan, that will depend on the mortality of teachers. The twice salary/pension coverage under our plan ceases at age 65 ($15,000 benefit is maintained post age 65), and if teachers remain healthy and live beyond age 65, further increases can be avoided. If there are a significant number of deaths of young teachers, premiums will increase.

The fees under the Newfoundland and Labrador Suggested Dental Fee Guide increase every year and this is out of our control. If claiming of dental benefits remain stable, as they have for the last several years, future premium rate increases should be limited to keeping pace with the Fee Guide – approximately 4% per year.

As for the Health plan, premium rates are subject to much greater fluctuations as new and improved (but expensive) prescription drugs come on the market, and as our teaching population lives longer aided by expensive medication and increased number of claims. Unfortunately, the anticipated trend for Health Insurance plans across North America, including our plan, continues to be close to double-digit inflation. Unless this trend reduces or there is a reduction in benefits, we can expect significant annual increases in Health Insurance premium rates for the foreseeable future. The only truly effective means of maintaining or reducing premium rates is for teachers to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles, maintain health, and thereby reduce the necessity of making claims.

The NLTA Group Insurance Trustees will continue to attempt to provide a comprehensive insurance program for teachers with good benefits at the lowest possible premium rate.

Don Ash is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Recovery for the Academic Athlete

by MARIE WALL

What is an academic athlete? An athlete is a person who commits their life to a pursuit of excellence. The arena of academic athletics is teaching. An athlete requires proficiency in several areas: endurance, strength, flexibility, balance and recovery. Imagine a gymnast; their physical well-being would be their primary focus, but the emotional, mental and spiritual components would be essential for their overall excellence. It would appear for the academic athlete that mental energy would be the driving force of competence, but being healthy physically, emotionally and spiritually would enhance your ability to be fully engaged at school and at home. Crucial to being a healthy athlete who is able to perform at high levels and have a balanced life, is recovery. The focus of this article is the necessary recovery for the academic athlete – you.

The Role of Recovery

Recovery is the downtime between high energy outputs; it is necessary for the renewal of mental and physical energy. Consider energy out as stress and energy in as recovery. During the year you have been in a cycle of high energy output over a long period of time. There may have been a few recovery breaks in there, but now that the off season is around the corner it is essential to make this a recovery period for your energy stores.

A recovery period is a time to be relieved of the workplace demands. To have a vacation from the necessities of the workplace schedules, paperwork and all activities of the school year. This recovery is time to do other things and focus on family and self in a completely different manner. It gives you an opportunity to mellow out and put your attention into pursuit of other interests. It is a vacation; a time to recover from the high energetic output and restore your energy.

Much of our culture values constant output and has little or no value on renewal of energy. This is why the athletic analogy is useful. In athletics, recovery is a vital part of the training cycle. If an athlete does not have sufficient periods of recovery they are at risk of overtraining and underperforming, while excessive recovery can have the same effect of under performing due to under training. There needs to be a proportional balance of output with recovery to optimize performance; both short intervals of recovery and more intense periods of renewal, such as summer, are required for optimal performance.

The Off Season

For the academic athlete, teaching is a demanding endeavour which requires that you pay attention to your energy output – stress, and energy input – recovery. The summer is the off season for academic athletes. How you use your time to restore and renew your energy is a critical period in your performance cycle. It is common knowledge that professional athletes use their off season to let go of past performance and prepare for the upcoming season. Do you think they stop playing sports? This is doubtful, but the sports may be of a different nature and the training would be focused on renewal, not performance. This can be true for the academic athlete as well. Your off season renewal may take any number of directions. The essential aspect is to get rest from the demands of work, recharge your energy and renew your focus in the areas of your life that are most important – relationships, health, happiness and friendships.

Whatever the expectations and outcomes this school year presented, it is coming to a close. The summer is an opportunity for adjustments and changes. We have all heard, "You are what you eat." An even truer statement is, "You are how well you take care of yourself." To take care of yourself well requires daily and yearly renewal. While it may be difficult to maintain healthy practices during the year, the off season presents an opportunity to put into practice the lifestyle changes you would like to integrate into your personal routine, whether they are physical, emotional, mental or spiritual in nature.

The off season can also be a time to work on the areas that need tweaking. Let's consider what new routines may be of benefit to you: an eating plan, exercise plan, yoga, organizational skills, reconnecting to your relationships, paying attention to creating a positive attitude, or any number of pursuits which can help you move towards the goal of health, happiness and balance.

Cross-Training During the Off Season

Again, to consider the sport analogy, the off season is used to develop non-dominant areas and heal injuries possibly through cross-training. Try to pick up an activity or learn a skill that may be a stretch for you. This is a way to extend your interests and give you relief from the norms of the yearly routine. You may find an interest that you had not realized you would enjoy.

When conducting workshops I have often spoken about "me time". This year I have reframed this to "recovery time". The reason is simple. Many people related "me time" to selfishness and alone activities. "Recovery time" provides a much broader concept that can include any activities that are restorative, whether alone or with others. Recovery in our emotional arena is essential to sustaining the key components of our lives – family and friends. An activity that is enjoyable, fulfilling and affirming serves as a source of emotional renewal and recovery.

As academic athletes, mental performance is in high demand. The recovery time of summer provides relief from the mental demands you have been fulfilling; a vacation from all the schedules and calendars that school life imposes. Your need for high focus deserves a break and it permits room for more creativity. To maximize your mental capacity, this recovery is essential.

Spiritual renewal is a balancing act between the commitments to the purposes beyond yourself with adequate self-care. You are of no assistance to others if your energy stores are depleted. Even if it is hard to believe your self-care is a selfless act, remember that you use your energy for the greater purposes in your life and refilling the tank is a part of that.

As an academic athlete you have playing seasons and off seasons. Use this summer to recover from the demands of teaching and preparing yourself for the year is the gift you can give yourself and consequently, your family and your work. The challenge is to become fully engaged, invested in yourself, your family and your school when you are working. I wish you a joyous and safe summer of recovery.

Marie Wall is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Marie Wall (ext. 265) or Claudette Coombs (ext. 242).

National Media Education Expert Guest Speaker for AMLNL

The Association for Media Literacy for Newfoundland and Labrador (AMLNL) was proud to present John Pungente as their first guest speaker in April. Visiting St. John's and making presentations at St. Bon's, Pungente was keen to meet with the members of the newly invigorated Association which has been in existence since 2003. In his role as President of the Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO), Pungente has been very supportive of the AMLNL since its inception and of newly elected president, Leslie Kennedy. "John's enthusiasm and commitment to Media Education is contagious," says Ms. Kennedy. "From our first correspondence he has shared his vast expertise and helped me connect with other associations as well as media education experts across the country".

Pungente, creator and host of the award-winning Bravo! television show *Scanning the Movies*, and teaching kit, *Scanning Television* and *Scanning Television 2* has given over 300 presentations across Canada and Australia, in Europe, Great Britain, the USA and Japan and currently serves as a consultant to media professionals including CHUM Television, the CBC, the NFB, YTV and Warner Bros. Canada. In speaking to the group assembled in the NLTA boardroom both physically and virtually (several members from central Newfoundland linked up through video conferencing technology made available by the Virtual Teacher Centre), Pungente emphasized the fact that since 2000, media education has been mandated across Canada. He highlighted key concepts emphasizing the deliberate, constructed nature of any media text and that each individual understands the message of that text based on their unique experience. As Level II Holy Heart student Desiree Baker states, "We need to ask questions about what we are watching, the messages we are constantly receiving. When awareness increases, so too does our ability to remain objective and critical towards something that has become a huge part of out culture".

To illustrate many of his points, Pungente shared clips from a new online university credit course for teachers, *Inside Plato's Cave*. Designed for teachers as an interactive way to learn about and teach Media Education, this course actually has a strong Newfoundland connection as René Wicks, (former Administrative Officer with the PD Division of the NLTA) and Alex Hickey and Brian Pittman of the NLTA Virtual Teacher Centre have worked on production and the Virtual Teacher Centre is running the online technical part of the course. From the famous *Spaghetti Story, an April Fool from the 1960s* to *Boston Legal* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to the 41 product placements in *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*, the possibilities for critical thinking, the key pedagogical thrust media education, are endless. As of yet the program has not been made available to the public, but Athabasca University and/or the University of Toronto are likely sites in the fall of 2008.

Pungente urged the Association to actively seek out means of teacher training in this area as well as the provision of high quality resources as, "It's senseless to mandate media literacy and then not have the tools to do it". To this end he suggested looking for funding for summer institutes which was a very exciting idea. George Tucker, Administrative Officer of Professional Development for the NLTA, also in attendance that day, sees media education as important as it spans all grade levels and virtually every curriculum area.

So expect to be hearing more from the AMLNL and for more information, please contact Leslie L. Kennedy, President, at lesliekennedy6525@yahoo.com or Tracy Fry, Vice President, at tracyrockwoodfry@esdnl.ca.

l-r: Brian Pittman, René Wicks, John Pungente, Leslie Kennedy, Desiree Baker.

"Good Works" Works

by BEVERLEY PARK

It was bound to happen. With over 10+ years of catching Sunday flights for Monday workshops, it defies the odds that it didn't happen sooner! I missed my flight. Didn't sleep in! Didn't get delayed en route to the airport! Didn't misread the 24-hour clock to think 14h00 was 4:00p.m. Nope. I just simply thought I was leaving Monday…so I show up at the airport 18 hours late and with no way to get to my destination, apparently. That's under "normal" circumstances. I have come to learn and appreciate that some people (thankfully) can get beyond the confines of normal as defined in schedules and strict rules. They do "the right thing" as opposed to blindly following the protocols that are printed in the handbooks.

When faced with a customer (me) who clearly had screwed up, to whom they had no obligation, Vince and his colleagues at Provincial Airlines and Tina at Air Labrador could simply have said "Sorry, there's nothing we can do for you." Frankly, I would not have had a leg to stand on (or a wing to fly on). Looking at their individual schedules, neither PAL nor Air Labrador should have been able to get me where I needed to go. Then, one of them, in a moment that could only be described as compassion, suggested to the other: "If you can get her to such and such a place, I'll see what I can do to get her connected onward." Hands started flying over keyboards and numbers were dialed to various operations' personnel while I stood by and watched in desperation. Within 20 minutes I was on my way. The stunned look on my face was partially due to the shock of the emergency I had created, and awe at the effectiveness of the airlines' staff. As they worked I overheard the conversations, saw the glances. I knew they were bending some rules, that they were taking some risks, doing everything in their power and even a little more, to solve my problem. Why did they go the extra mile? Perhaps it was the desperate look on my face, or that I am one of their "frequent flyers" and they wanted to keep me happy. Maybe it was a bit of both. I think it's because they are good, good people doing a great job. They are on the front lines. Of the many, many times I have travelled, to destinations near and far, I have observed these people. They're the ones who take the flack when things go wrong. Heck! I have even seen them get hell when things are going as they should.

Teachers are also front line people. Every day a hundred and one things go right for a hundred and one people in a hundred and one ways. Then there's the day that the normally dependable student shows up with his homework not done; the girl who always comes prepared is just not ready to write the test; the parent… the colleague… Well, you get it. Like Vince and Tina that day, we are frequently called upon to solve problems not of our own making. We sometimes face the hostility of people who take their frustrations out on us. I can only hope that when faced with such situations in future I will have the patience, the grace, and the humanity to handle with care. That morning at the airport I had a suitcase in tow – but in reality, my invisible baggage was the burden. It was the pressure to get somewhere – a job to do and people depending on me. It was the baggage of anxiety and frustration.

We never know what circumstances people are facing. Those who appear least deserving may be most in need of our good humour or our patience. It is said that every interaction between two people will be either humanizing or de-humanizing – and it will be the same for both. You cannot humiliate, denigrate or in any way put someone down without also lowering yourself. Conversely, all acts of kindness, all gestures of goodwill not only elevate the person on the receiving end, but also the one who offers them.

A study on depression and happiness found that levels of serotonin (the feel-good neurotransmitter in the brain), predictably increased in those who were being treated with kindness. Surprisingly it spiked even more in those who were behaving kindly, the givers. That sounds like a prescription better than Prozac! And if "feeling good" doesn't seem like sufficient motivation to behave kindly, there's a library of research that links whether or not students feel good about themselves to effective learning. For teachers it's the same. It is often referred to as our sense of efficacy – our feeling that we are competent and capable. Students who feel good about themselves learn better. Teachers who make students feel valued teach better. Practice not random acts of kindness but deliberate and intentional acts of kindness every day – to your students, to your colleagues, to your parents, to yourselves. This seems to me to be one of the most effective pebbles we as educators can drop into the educational pond.

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

National Congress on Rural Education

Honouring Youth: Celebrating Student Success

by PATRICK HOWARD

Discussions of rural education in Canada are most often characterized by the concerns stemming from decreasing enrolments, school funding, providing an equitable, well resourced curriculum, teacher recruitment and retention and the challenges posed by geography and distance. During March 30 to April 1, teachers, parents, students, school board and government personnel, trustees, and academics gathered in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to collaborate, discuss, share and confer on the many facets of rural education in Canada. This year the Department of Education sponsored five teachers from across Newfoundland and Labrador to attend the national congress.

The theme of the three day congress was *Honouring Youth: Celebrating Student Success*. Despite the ongoing challenges common to the delivery of education in rural and remote communities across Canada, the focus and tone of the congress was celebratory and upbeat as students, districts and communities shared examples of the outstanding opportunities being created by and for students in rural schools across the country. A long list of presenters shared insights and information on a wide variety of topics relevant to rural education.

Raffi Cavoukian, the famous Canadian children's entertainer, gave a keynote address in which he shared with the audience his latest work, a book titled *Child Honouring*. Raffi's focus has shifted from singing for children to social and environmental activism. His recent project is a collaboration with some of the most identifiable names in the world today, from the Dalai Lama to Al Gore. His book seeks to raise awareness about the choices we make and how they affect the earth, our communities and ostensibly the generations that come after us. Raffi challenged rural educators to think carefully on the lessons we teach, both consciously and unconsciously, about how to dwell with respect and restraint in the places we live.

Dr. Christopher Spence, a former CFL football player, junior high principal and current school board director in Ontario, delivered his keynote address that challenged rural educators to maintain a "laser light focus on teaching and learning." Spence promotes educational change based on expanding program options for students, building a sense of belonging in schools and fostering community partnerships. Underlying Spence's message was a belief that educational change depends on teaching effectiveness and teachers must be challenged with "job embedded professional development that is ongoing and on the job."

Choosing sessions to attend in a program filled with interesting and worthwhile presentations is always a challenge. Dr. Aniko Varpalotai of the University of Western Ontario described a course she designed and delivers in the Faculty of Education at UWO. *Teaching in Rural and Remote Schools and Communities* provides pre-service education students with an introduction to the historical, social and political issues facing the rural teacher in Ontario today. Issues such as: geographical isolation, single school communities, school closures, resource based economies, limited access to social and other services presents both challenges and opportunities for the rural educator. It was interesting to think that such a course, designed for this province, should be mandatory for all education students preparing to teach in Newfoundland and Labrador!

Dr. Mike Corbett of Acadia University presented the results of a research study undertaken with Dr. Dennis Mulcahey of Memorial. The study was instituted, rather intriguingly, on the request of a small municipality in Nova Scotia. The town was in the all too familiar position of seeing its school closed and children bussed to larger schools and, according to the School Board, a "superior" education than could be offered by their small school. Corbett and Mulcahey, set out to research the literature on small

school achievement and opportunity and conducted interviews with stakeholders and former students. The findings of the inquiry were to be used in a court challenge to the board's decision to close the small school. The research determined that the school, contrary to the board's position, was viable. Small schools are unique, safe and caring places that mediate the effects of lower socio economic status by providing an egalitarian and healthy environment in which rural children can excel. The study may offer strong evidence-based research to parents making a case for the survival of community schools in this province.

The presentation, *CyberTalk: Technology Use Among Rural Adolescents*, proved to be an informative and fascinating look at the proliferation of social networking, text messaging, cellular phone use and instant messaging software among adolescents. Dr. Robin Bright of the University of Lethbridge reported that the results of the study conducted in rural communities in southern Alberta reveal that rural adolescents in grades 6-9 and ages 12-16 are confidently mastering available online communication technologies and using them mostly for entertainment and social purposes. Students rely on these technologies to communicate with friends – both previously met face-to-face and those met exclusively on-line – to discuss sensitive matters such as sexuality and to broaden their social networks. However, students increasingly rely on these technologies to bully others, meet other troubled youth, and communicate with unknown persons. Dr. Bright's presentation revealed startling and troubling facts that call upon educators to keep pace with the changing software to better guide students in the safe and appropriate use of this new media.

The Congress offered teachers from this province greater insight into both the successes and challenges inherent in the delivery of rural education across the country. The opportunities to talk with educators and trustees also led to the realization that Newfoundland and Labrador is a leader in innovative ways to overcome the challenges of distance and geography, specifically in our use of technology through the CDLI initiative. It became obvious that this province has much to share with the country when it comes to creative and effective instruction in rural and remote classrooms. The Congress was a wonderful professional development opportunity as it afforded teachers from this province a chance to become part of a network of education professionals dedicated to enhancing rural education.

Patrick Howard is English Department Head at Baie Verte Collegiate.

GMPP Information Sessions

As in previous years, Great West Life and the Department of Finance, Pensions Administration Division, will be facilitating Plan Member Information Sessions. During 2008 the sessions will run from September 22 to October 10. Presentations usually last between 1- 1½ hours.

Why Are the Sessions Offered?
GMPP members are responsible for making investment decisions within their plan and for using the information and decision-making tools made available to them in making their decision. Attendees will be provided with information that will assist them in making an investment decision, specific to their Investment Personality, which is critical in helping them maximize their potential investment return. If the plan member makes no investment decision, contributions are directed to the default investment funds, which may not meet the member's expectations. The sessions will illustrate the various investment options and explain how the Plan works, including termination options, vesting requirements, transfer of pension credits to other plans, how to determine your Investment Personality, etc.

For further information contact:
Michael J Rickert, RPA, Departmental Programme Co-ordinator
Public Service Pensions, Department of Finance
Tel: (709) 729-6073, Fax: (709) 729-2070

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Mourning, Teaching and Learning

by DENNIS ABBOTT

Most teachers enter the Masters Program for one of three reasons: more money, more professional opportunities, or more money. My primary reason was to increase my professional opportunities, although I have not decided to donate my new found wealth to charity, as of yet. I soon learned that the best things in life are not pursued, but stumbled upon. Shortly after beginning, I stumbled upon a professor who nudged me toward an area of research that became both professionally relevant and personally rewarding.

Even after two years of reading, discussing and writing on this topic, I find myself unable to clearly explain its basic tenets; as I say to my students: *clear as mud*. However, I began to blend an academic concoction that included the conceptual ingredients of Media Literacy, Self-reflexivity and Loss.

By seeking the means to expand my professional opportunities, I found myself sifting through the difficulties of my childhood: my father's abandonment and my uncle's death. On the fourth floor somewhere in the book stacks of the Queen Elizabeth II Library, I began to realize what damage such pain wrecks on children who have suffered a loss in their lives. Simultaneously, I began to identify the means in which most young people endure and survive such grief.

When I could not, or would not, express my emotions, thoughts and ideas to those around me, I found another mode of expression. For many that need for emotional release grows like a cancer and eats away at the pure soul of a once innocent child. Fortunately, my expression became an escape from the real to the fictional. The need to escape into a fictional world ultimately developed into a love for books – a form of pop culture, much like the Harry Potters of today.

I cannot assume to know how many students have, or will lose their way because of the abandonment or death of a parent or sibling. But I do know, from much of my research and personal experience, that many of the problems that exist in the school system today can be attributed to the broken lives of its students.

The best way to confront such issues, as educators, is to educate. Within our curriculum there exists a wealth of tools that can bridge the gap to who are dealing with grief. Oddly enough, we can also teach them an array of curricular skills as we are reaching out. For example, the Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide recommends approximately 24 novels that focus on a character that has lost a significant person in his/her life. More importantly, each and every novel weaves a tale of how that character deals, endures, survives and triumphs over his/her monumental obstacles.

In the novel *Mick Harte was Here*, a young girl mourns the tragic loss of her brother. While riding his bike without a helmet the young, vibrant Mick Harte is killed. The novel explores issues of denial, guilt, anger and acceptance of Mick's death in a no-holds barred confessional style of first-person narrative. It is extremely powerful for everyone who reads it, but for those who have lived similar experiences it becomes communal, cathartic and therapeutic. Such a novel can become an avenue to express and exchange buried feelings that are so often too awkward to discuss openly in the classroom environment.

So if you are sitting there wondering if you should enter the Master Program, or more specifically, you are wondering what will I get out of such a time-consuming adventure? I will attest that you will get out what you put in; and for some that is just money, for others it is a gateway into another domain of the vast entity we call Education; and if you are lucky, you may get to pay in the extra taxes on your bi-weekly stub and a new job description. But maybe, if you are truly fortunate, you will stumble upon something much more profound and personally rewarding.

The following is a list of Elementary novels that deal with issues of loss: *The Bridge to Terabithia; Mick Harte was Here; Where have you been, Billy Boy?; Ella Enchanted; Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes; Safe Return; Home Child; The Belonging Place; Sarah, Plain and Tall; The Indian School; Lone Wolf; Words of Stone; Sun and Spoon; Out of Dust; Out of the Dark; Baby; The Flip-flop Girl; Missing May; The Baby Project; On My Honor; Charlotte's Web; Truth-Singer; Pit Pony; The Sky is Falling;* and *A Question of Trust*. There are many other novels that deal with grief and loss in the Intermediate and Senior High Programs.

Dennis Abbott is a classroom teacher at St. Mark's School in King's Cove, NL.

Pedometer Research at Random Island Academy

A Teacher Wellness Opportunity

by VERLE JOHNSON

Random Island Academy, along with four other schools in the Eastern School District, have become involved in a project that ensures daily activities for our students. The major goal of this project is to ensure twenty minutes of Quality Daily Physical Activity (QDPA) for all students. Recognizing that physical education does not occur daily, under this project, extra activities will occur in the classroom and in the gymnasium when regular physical education classes are not happening. Teachers attempt to integrate physical activity into their regular lesson plan outcomes creating opportunities for students and teachers to move physically throughout the day.

With all the activity present in our school, Dr. Antony Card, in partnership with Memorial University, has given us the opportunity to collect some data which involves our Grade 3 students. This collection of data involved pedometer readings acquired from Grade 3 students. The information collected will give us a better indication of the activity levels of our Grade 3 students. For those of us who are not familiar with a pedometer, here is a brief description. A pedometer is simply an electronic device that clips on your hip and counts your steps.

Since we had access to extra pedometers, I thought it was a great opportunity to collect some data from the teachers as well. Here's a run down on how I collected my teacher data. All teachers were given a pedometer. They had 2-3 days to use them and get readings of their step counts. My objective in collecting this data was to find out, on average, how far a teacher is moving during a normal school day. A normal day at Random Island Academy may involve traveling from class to class, morning/recess or lunchtime duty, classroom teaching, after school coaching, etc.

Understanding that all schools in the district are different, my data may not be appropriate for your school. However, this data should correlate to schools and teachers that follow a similar school day.

Prior to collecting the data, all teachers were aware that this experiment was strictly voluntary and it was not a competition. I collected my data over a period of four working days. Teachers were required to set their pedometers at 0 upon entering the building in the morning and recording their steps upon leaving the school for the day.

The overall average was 4,962 steps per day. To give you a better idea of how far this is, I used the distance conversion formula from www.stepscount.com. With the average adult having a normal step stride of 76 cm, 1,320 steps would be approximately 1 km. From my results, the staff at Random Island Academy, over a four day period, had individually walked about 3.8 km per day.

With a pedometer, setting and achieving personal goals are very attainable. It's much easier to achieve goals if you can measure your progress and see your results. Pedometers can help teachers build their own physical activity level while at work.

I hope I have inspired you to think twice before getting on that elevator. Take the stairs and get your QDPA. Stay healthy… stay happy!

Verle Johnson is Physical Education/Mathematics teacher at Random Island Academy.

Staff of Random Island Academy.

Pre-Retirement Seminars

Teachers within two years of retirement eligibility should register for one of the NLTA's seven Pre-Retirement Seminars scheduled to be held in the fall of 2008 in Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. (Please note: consideration will be given to combining seminars if registration numbers are sufficiently low in a particular seminar.) These seminars are held in accordance with Association policy as part of its overall program of pre-retirement counselling. Clause 18.12 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 29.12 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement provide two days paid leave to attend these seminars.

Information sessions will deal with topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Severance Pay, Employment Insurance, NLTA Group Insurance, Financial and Estate Planning and the Canada Pension Plan. As well, time is available for individual counselling of prospective retirees by the various consultants.

Things You Should Know About Attending

- Potential participants must register with the NLTA for a particular seminar and apply to their Board office for leave.
- Only those teachers eligible to retire during or before June 2011 will be eligible to attend.
- Registration must be received at the NLTA Office at least four weeks in advance to ensure approval of attendance.
- The Association reserves the right to refuse acceptance of registration at any particular seminar if the registration forms have not been received at the NLTA office in accordance with Association policy.
- It is the responsibility of the individual participant to make arrangements and pay for hotel accommodations, should any be required. Please reference that you are attending an NLTA function and the hotel should provide a reduced rate which is available to the NLTA.
- Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the following provisions:
  i) participants shall be reimbursed the lesser of travel by private vehicle or public transportation to the seminar closest to the place of residence. In the event that a teacher requests and is accepted to attend a seminar other than the closest seminar, the participant shall only be reimbursed the amount applicable for travel to the closest seminar.
  ii) payment for private vehicle shall be at the rate which is 15% of the average cost of self-serve regular gasoline as determined on the first day of each fiscal quarter for the return trip from residence to seminar site.
  iii) travel via public conveyance shall be reimbursed at the rate of 80 percent of ferry, taxi, or economy airfare; in the case of airfare, the lesser of excursion (seat sale) or 80 percent of economy airfare will be paid, where excursion (seat sale) fares can be arranged. Receipts shall be required for all reimbursement.
  iv) no expenses will be paid to participants living or teaching in the community where the seminar is held.
  v) a spouse is welcome to accompany the participating teacher to the pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be covered.
- All other expenses, such as meals, accommodation and child care, are the responsibility of the participating teacher.
- Expenses will be provided for one pre-retirement seminar only and a teacher participant shall be permitted to attend one seminar only. (Notwithstanding this, a teacher may attend a second seminar as a spouse.)
- Teachers must attend the seminar location closest to their place of residence, except in cases where the mode, cost or availability of transportation necessitates otherwise.
- Directors and Assistant Directors, and spouses, are welcome to attend one pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be paid in accordance with this policy.

Given the large number of teachers eligible to retire, we reserve the right to limit the number of people who will be granted access, depending on the physical facilities available at each site. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers plan ahead and register early in the event that registrations have to be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

NOTE: The full text of the NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars and the registration form can also be found on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). A link on the main page called "Forms Online" will bring you to the registration form and policy. The NLTA policy will also be mailed to teachers with confirmation of registration.

2008 Pre-Retirement Seminar

REGISTRATION FORM

Name

Home Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Social Insurance Number

School Name

School Telephone

Email

Please check which session you will be attending:

- ☐ **Oct. 2-3** – Hotel Gander, Gander
- ☐ **Oct. 16-17** – Greenwood Inn, Corner Brook
- ☐ **Oct. 23-24** – Mt. Peyton, Grand Falls-Windsor
- ☐ **Nov. 6-7** – Holiday Inn, Stephenville
- ☐ **Nov. 13-14** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Nov. 20-21** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Dec. 4-5** – Holiday Inn, St. John's

Will your spouse be attending? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of spouse (if attending)

Earliest eligibility date for pension

Have you attended a previous pre-retirement seminar?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Note:

- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2011) are eligible to attend.
- All participants must pre-register.
- You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
- Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
- Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:

Melanie Jaster
Benefits and Economic Services Division,
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 *(toll free)*

NOTE: As space is limited, registrations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

FOR NLTA OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Received	Confirmation Sent	Information Package Sent

NUTRITION INSTITUTE

July 7-9, 2008

Corner Brook. Hosted by the Department of Education. The focus of the three-day institute is on skill development for teachers who work in a food laboratory environment. Priority will be given to teachers of Nutrition 2102/3102. Expressions of interest should be directed to ellencoady@gov.nl.ca.

ATLANTIC CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE EDUCATORS (ACASE) AGM AND CONFERENCE

July 10-12, 2008

St. Mary's University, Halifax. Theme: *Science Engages "Energy"!* For further information go to www.acase.ca or contact Craig White, craigwhite@gov.nl.ca, Tel: 709-729-2614.

2008 GENOCIDE EDUCATION INSTITUTE: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH GENOCIDE EDUCATION

August 11-15, 2008

Toronto, ON. Presented by the Canadian Centre for Genocide Education, B'nai Brith Canada, Humura Association, and Canadians Against Slavery and Torture in Sudan. Featuring Barbara Coloroso, internationally recognized speaker and author. Cost: $350. Registration Deadline: June 30. Register at www.genocideeducation.ca. For more information email inquiries@genocideeducation.ca.

ONSITE 2008

August 14-20, 2008

Gros Morne National Park. ONSITE '08 is a week-long professional development opportunity for Environmental Science and Social Studies teachers led by Parks Canada staff and facilitated by representatives from the Department of Education and the NLTA. Environmental Science teachers will explore and experience the habitats and ecosystems of Gros Morne National Park. Social Studies teachers will have an opportunity to visit the Parks Canada sites at Gros Morne National Park, Port au Choix, St. Anthony, L'Anse aux Meadows, etc. Participants will receive full funding from the Department of Education. For further information contact George Tucker, NLTA Administrative Officer (PD Division), Tel: 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245; gtucker@nlta.nl.ca.

KINDERGARTEN INSTITUTE

August 25-27, 2008

St. John's. Hosted by the Department of Education. Using play-based approaches in the kindergarten classroom to achieve curriculum outcomes. Sessions will include puppetry, a kindergarten classroom makeover and incorporating mathematics in the KinderStart program. Expressions of interest should be directed to Michelle Coady, Primary Program Development Specialist, Department of Education, michelleacoady@gov.nl.ca.

EECOM 08 CONFERENCE

September 25-28, 2008

Gros Morne National Park. *An Environmental Learning Gathering: Reconnect, Rethink, Rejoice.* Approximately 300 Environmental Educators from across the country will attend this three-day event. Keynotes: Father John McCarthy, Bob McDonald and Sarah Harmer. For more information visit www.eecom.org.

TOURETTE SYNDROME FOUNDATION OF CANADA AGM AND CONFERENCE

October 2-4, 2008

Delta Conference Centre, St. John's. Sponsored by the Newfoundland Chapter of the Tourette Syndrome Foundation. Friday, October 3: Educators' Track – sessions for teachers/guidance counsellors at all levels. International speakers on Tourette Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and ADHD. Friday's Educators' Track will have emphasis on strategies and resources to deal with the impact of these and other neurological disorders on education and behaviour. For further information call toll free 1-800-361-3120 or visit www.tourette.ca.

NL COUNSELLORS' & PSYCHOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION (NLCPA) ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM

October 22-24, 2008

Battery Hotel & Suites, St. John's. Theme: *Prioritizing Counselling & Intervention in Our Schools.* For more information contact: Leona Gillard, NLCPA Communications Coordinator, leonagillard@esdnl.ca, Tel: 709-786-9056; or Trent Langdon, NLCPA President, trentlangdon@esdnl.ca, Tel: 709-786-0280.

4TH ANNUAL CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

November 3-4, 2008

Deerhurst Resort, Hunstville, ON. Pre-Conference: Dr. Eva Olsson, Barbara Coloroso, Dr. Terry Scott. Keynote Speakers: Stephen Lewis, Michael "Pinball" Clemons, Dr. Hal Urban. For further information visit www.ncec.ca.

TEACHING WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND

November 6-7, 2008

Delta Conference Centre, St. John's. Internationally renowned "brain-based learning" guru and educator Eric Jensen will be presenting this two-day workshop entitled *Teaching With the Brain in Mind.* Further details on cost and registration will be available in the near future. For further information contact George Tucker, NLTA Administrative Officer (PD Division), Tel: 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245; gtucker@nlta.nl.ca.

Dates to Remember

June 2008

June 6-7	NLTA Executive Meeting
June 15	**Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
June 19	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

July 2008

July 31	**Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications